From:	Elaine Zecher
To:	McGovern, Marc
Subject:	Call for Transparency and an end to the Demonization of Israel
Date:	Tuesday, April 17, 2018 4:05:56 PM

Dear City Council Member Marc C. McGovern,

My name is Andy Tarsy. I am a Cambridge resident (8 Howard Street); my name is Gary Pforzheimer, I am a Cambridge business owner; my name is Elaine Zecher and I am the Senior Rabbi at Temple Israel of Boston with many members who live in Cambridge. We have a serious concern to raise about an upcoming discussion of the Council regarding a resolution to boycott Hewlet-Packard (HP). This matter has come to our attention via fellow congregants at Temple Israel of Boston.

Apparently, the Council is imminently going to be considering a resolution that calls for the City of Cambridge "to end its contracts" with Hewlett-Packard (HP), and will apparently call on the Council to "end [HP's] support for violence against and oppression of Palestinians, deportations and surveillance of immigrants in the U.S., and oppression and surveillance of those currently and formerly incarcerated in the U.S."

We are deeply concerned that this wrong-headed, misguided and meaningless action might be taken by the elected leaders of the city where Andy lives, Gary owns a business and members of the Temple Israel community live and work. In addition, where Andy's children are growing up, where he owns a home and also where he works. This resolution will have no legal significance and will influence nothing. It will, however, have negative implications beyond Hewlett-Packard and, if adopted, would tarnish the reputation of the city. It is nothing more than an effort to malign the State of Israel by singling it out for condemnation in a forum that has no role in foreign policy. It is the latest effort by a coalition of forces that do not have the city's interests in mind and are instead hoping that our liberal and sensitive disposition will lead to a quick vote and a symbolic victory for them to brag about across the internet.

The Cambridge City Council should not abdicate its responsibilities to an interest group whose purpose is to demonize Israel and distract from our local agenda. That said – if it is the Council's unbending desire to pass resolutions targeting individual technology companies as a way of addressing the situation in the middle east, such a resolution would require a full and fair public hearing, including inviting experts and interested parties to weigh in openly before action is taken.

o Singling out Israel and HP, amongst all the nations, companies, and conflicts in the world, and holding them to a unique ethical standard raises troubling issues. Thousands of American companies that are working overseas and engaged in transactions that can be tied to questionable human rights practices; including numerous companies with Cambridge contacts.

o It would be one thing if the Cambridge City Council elected to adopt a foreign policy that it applied without prejudice to nations and companies around the world. However, in this instance, Council action in favor of the proposal would signal willful ignorance of scores of other situations and would indicate that the body operates by adopting wholesale the dubious and largely unexamined claims made by an outside organization.

o The BDS movement which is behind the effort to see this resolution pass is bad for the effort to achieve peace and a two-state solution, all of which we unequivocally support. Boycotts like the one targeting HP undermine this effort, fuel polarization, and strengthen the hands of those who reject co-existence.

We cannot underscore how important it is that the members of the Cambridge City Council reject this ill-conceived distraction and singling out of one nation and one conflict with no indication that the effort is in the interests of Cambridge, and with no consideration of the many ways it is harmful to us. This action would be wrong for Cambridge and does not advance the prospects for achieving a lasting peace or addressing the other issues the BDS activists have tacked on to their effort.

We would be glad to engage with the Council members directly, and to testify as to our strong belief that this resolution would have a chilling effect on relations with the business sector, the diverse community of those who support a key US Ally, and the process of securing a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sincerely,

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Regards,
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